PRRC emerging trends

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ARE YOUTH MINISTRIES BEARING FRUIT?

PRINCETON, N.J. – Judging from a wide range of survey evidence, the renewed efforts of clergy and religious educators in the late 1970s to reach young people appear to be bearing fruit.

Gallup surveys in 1980 and 1981 reveal new signs of interest and involvement in religion on the part of the nation's youngest adults, paralleling reports from churches across the nation of a growing interest in religion among young people.

The following trends, covering 7 aspects of America's religious life, suggest that the long-term decline in religious interest and involvement between the mid-60s and late 70s may be coming to an end. In fact, the trend in the case of certain dimensions reveals marginal upturns, among younger adults as well as their elders.

By way of background, it is interesting to note that the sharpest decline in religious participation between the mid-60s and late-70s was recorded among young adults.

1. IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION
(Percent saying religion is "very important" in their lives)

	Total	18-29	30-49	50 & over
Latest	55%	43%	55%	66%
1978	52	39	50	64

2. SALIENCY OF RELIGION
(Percent saying religion can answer today's problems)

	Total	18-29	30-49	50 & over
Latest	65%	58%	60%	73%
1974	62	55	64	66

3. CHURCH ATTENDANCE
(Percent attending in typical week)

	Total	18-29	30-49	50 & over
Latest	40%	31%	40%	47%
1979	40	29	42	47
1978	41	29	42	48

4. CONFIDENCE IN ORGANIZED RELIGION
(Percent saying they have a great deal of confidence)

	Total	18-29	30-49	50 & over
Latest	44%	32%	42%	55%
1979	40	32	37	48
1978	38	30	35	48

5. INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON SOCIETY
(Percent saying "increasing" or "same")

	Total	18-29	30-49	50 & over
Latest	46%	47%	49%	42%
1978	47	46	47	48
1976	52	48	50	56

6. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP
(Percent saying they are members)

	Total	18-29	30-49	50 & over
Latest	69%	59%	68%	76%
1979	68	58	64	75

7. RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE
(Those indicating a preference)

	Total	18-29	30-49	50 & over
Latest	93%	88%	93%	97%
1979	92	87	92	96

(Note: Seven percent currently say they have no religious preference while one percent give responses other than Protestant, Catholic, Jewish or Eastern Orthodox.)

FEW BUDDHISTS, MUSLIMS FOUND IN LATEST GALLUP AUDIT

PRINCETON, N.J. – The overwhelming majority of Americans (93%) place themselves within four major faith groupings, stating their religious preference as Protestant, Catholic, Jewish or Eastern Orthodox. Another 7% say they have no religious preference, while one percent give responses that are labelled "all others."

A careful examination of the responses of the last group who represent close to 2 million adults in the U.S., reveals that only one person in 20 in this group categorize themselves as Buddhists or Muslims, and an even smaller proportion say they are Hindus.

Extremely small proportions of the "all others" group state a religious preference that could be labelled a cult. At the same time, however, it should be borne in mind that some persons may classify themselves among the major faiths (Protestant, Catholic, Jewish or Eastern Orthodox) yet at the same time be involved or interested in a particular cult.

Regular Gallup surveys on religious preference reveal that a wide range of religions, denominations and movements are named by those whose responses place themselves outside the major faith groupings.

A fairly large proportion of the one percent who fall into the category of "all others" name independent Christian communities, many of which are Baptist-related and could be broadly classified as Protestant. The responses given next most often are: no specific denomination in particular, agnostic or atheist, Pentecostal, Unitarian Universal, Buddhist and Muslim.

From 5% to 1% Since 1974

The category "all others," in regular measurements of religious preference by the Gallup Poll, shows the percentage having increased from one percent in 1947 to 5% in 1974, the year that could perhaps be described as "the high water mark of unconventional religions." Since 1974 the proportion has declined from 5% to 1%.

Persons in the "all others" group tend to be young, male, college-educated, living in the West, and to describe themselves as Independents in politics.

Pope John Paul II's 'Highly Favorable' Rating One Of Highest Recorded

PRINCETON, N.J. – Pope John Paul II receives one of the highest ratings for personal popularity of any individual tested in the 30 years the Gallup Poll has undertaken these measurements.

Two persons in every three (65%) give the Pope a "highly favorable" rating. This rating is based on the top two positions (plus 5 and plus 4) on a 10-point attitudes scale, called the Stapel Scalometer, which measures intensity of feeling, both positive and negative.

Pope John Paul II's "highly favorable" rating is the highest given any person from another nation by Americans, and is exceeded among all persons tested only by the rating given President Dwight Eisenhower at the peak of his political career. In January, 1957, shortly after he was elected to his second term, Eisenhower was given a highly favorable rating of 72%.

The Pope's popularity trend line is noteworthy in other respects:

– His rating has trended *upward* during the period he has been in his present position, whereas a downward trend has usually been recorded in the case of other world figures the longer they have been in their position or role.

– The Pope's ratings are consistently high in terms of key demographics – age, education level, sex, and the like. In addition, little difference in ratings is found in terms of where survey respondents place themselves on a left/right, liberal/conservative scale, are seen below:

Highly Favorable Rating Of Pope Paul II

Those who say their political philosophy is:

Left of center	62%
Middle-of-the-road	64
Right of center	69

The table shows the trend in the Pope's ratings since December, 1978. His tour of the U.S. clearly boosted his rating, which he has sustained in subsequent measurements. The latest figure may reflect, in part, sympathy for the Pope in view of his prolonged recovery from the attempt on his life.

(See next page for ratings given other Popes.)

TREND IN 'HIGHLY FAVORABLE' RATING
(Plus 5, plus 4 on 10-point scale)

	National	Catholics	Protestants
LATEST(June 19-22) (assassination attempt)	65%	83%	60%
May, 1980	59	85	51
October, 1979 (tour of U.S.)	56	80	47
September, 1979	48	73	38
June, 1979	52	70	45
December, 1978	47	67	41

TREND IN OVERALL FAVORABLE RATING
(All 5 plus positions on scale)

	National	Catholics	Protestants
LATEST(June 19-22) (assassination attempt)	92%	95%	92%
May, 1980	89	98	86
October, 1979 (tour of U.S.)	85	95	81
September, 1979	80	93	75
June, 1979	82	93	77
December, 1978	85	95	81

TREND IN 'HIGHLY UNFAVORABLE' RATING
(Minus 5, minus 4 on 10-point scale)

	National	Catholics	Protestants
LATEST(June 19-22) (assassination attempt)	2%	*%	2%
May, 1980	4	*	4
October, 1979 (tour of U.S.)	4	*	5
September, 1979	3	1	4
June, 1979	2	*	2
December, 1978	1	1	1

TREND IN OVERALL UNFAVORABLE RATING
(All 5 minus positions on scale)

	National	Catholics	Protestants
LATEST(June 19-22) (assassination attempt)	3%	*%	5%
May, 1980	7	1	8
October, 1979 (tour of U.S.)	7	2	9
September, 1979	6	2	8
June, 1979	5	2	6
December, 1978	4	2	4

*Less than one percent.

Third Hold 'Favorable' Opinion Of Evangelist Jerry Falwell

PRINCETON, N.J. – About one-third of Americans hold a favorable opinion of the evangelist Rev. Jerry Falwell, founder of Moral Majority.

Persons in a recent nationwide Gallup survey were asked to rate Falwell on a 10-point attitude scale called the Stapel Scalometer, which measures intensity of feeling, both positive and negative.

A total of 7% give Falwell a "highly favorable" rating. This rating is based on the top two positions (plus 5 and plus 4). Another 28% give him a "mildly favorable" rating, based on the next three positions (plus 3, plus 2, and plus 1).

One person in three (36%) do not express an opinion or say they do not know enough about Falwell to give him a rating.

Protestants are more likely to give Falwell a "highly favorable" rating than are Catholics, 10% to 3%. Southerners tend to be higher on him than do persons in other areas of the nation. Survey respondents who place themselves to the right of center in terms of their own political philosophy give Falwell a "highly favorable" rating of 13%, compared to 4% among those who place themselves on the "middle-of-the-road" positions on the scale, while 8% on the left give Falwell this rating.

The full results for the nation as a whole are given in the accompanying table:

SCALOMETER RATING OF JERRY FALWELL

Highly favorable (+5, +4)	7%
Mildly favorable (+3, +2, +1)	28
TOTAL FAVORABLE:	35%
Mildly unfavorable (-1, -2, -3)	14%
Highly unfavorable((-4, -5)	15
TOTAL UNFAVORABLE:	29%
No opinion/unable to rate Falwell	36%
TOTAL	100%

SCALOMETER RATINGS GIVEN PREVIOUS POPES
(% Highly Favorable)

	National	Protestants	Catholics
POPE PAUL VI (1963-1978)			
1977 (May)	37%	26%	66%
1976 (May)	25	19	48
POPE JOHN XXIII (1958-1963)			
1960 (May)	34	20	77
(July)	34	19	77
(Aug.)	32	17	75
(Sept.)	32	16	76

Ways People Pray

PRINCETON, N.J. – Many religious observers believe that the best indicator of the spiritual health of a nation is the level of its prayer life.

While much further study needs to be done on the quality and intensity of our prayer life, it is clear that prayer is a regular part of the life of many Americans. The study of the *Unchurched American* revealed that 8 to 10 adults pray at least once a day. Ten percent say they pray "about twice a day" while 17% indicate that they pray three times a day or more.

When the sample was asked in which of 6 ways they have prayed during a 30-day period, a devout 15% indicated that they "pray constantly" – that "prayer is my life." Here are the full results:

Ways People Pray

Prayed privately by themselves	86%
Prayed during a worship service	48
Prayed with members of their family at meals	35
Prayed with members of their family other than at meals/church services	16
Prayed as a regular part of some group they now belong to (other than at a worship service)	16
Pray constantly – prayer is their life	15
Other responses	11
Don't know	2

How Many Practice Meditation Techniques?

How many Americans practice specific techniques of meditation – such as those taught in Transcendental Meditation, Zen, Divine Light Mission, or other techniques?

Results from the *Unchurched American* study that 8% of U.S. adults practice such techniques.

U.S., Canada Churchgoing Compared

PRINCETON, N.J. — A recent report from the Gallup-affiliated Canadian Institute of Public Opinion shows that 37% of Canadians attended church during the first week of May. While the current figure represents little change in church attendance during the late 1970s, it is considerably down from the 55% level found in 1965.

Churchgoing has remained fairly stable over the last few years among both Roman Catholics and Protestants. In the latest survey 51% of Catholics attended in the test week compared to 29% among Protestants.

The decline in churchgoing since 1965 has been primarily a Catholic phenomenon. In 1965, 83% of Canadian Catholics attended in a test week, while 32% of Protestants did so.

Churchgoing In United States

The national rate of attendance in the U.S. is similar, with 40% of adults attending church or synagogue in a typical week. Furthermore, the rate of attendance among U.S. Catholics closely parallels the rate among Canadian Catholics, with 53% in the U.S. attending on the average.

Churchgoing among U.S. Protestants, however, is considerably higher than it is among their Canadian counterparts — 39% compared to 29%.

As in Canada, churchgoing in the U.S. today is lower than in the mid-1960s, with the decline again almost entirely the result of a decline in attendance among Catholics. The dimension of the decline in churchgoing among Catholics has been slightly greater for Canada (down approximately 30 points over this 15-year period) than for the U.S. (down approximately 20 points).

Women Are More Regular Attenders

In both nations, women are more regular attenders than men, and older persons than younger. An interesting difference, however, is found in terms of level of formal education. While in the U.S. the rate of churchgoing is similar regardless of the degree of schooling, Canadians with a university background are considerably less likely to have attended during the test week than are those with only elementary or secondary schooling.

Trend In U.S., Canada Since '65

The following table compares the trend in churchgoing in the U.S. and Canada. The results for Canada are based on a survey conducted during the first week of May each year. The results for the U.S. are an average of several surveys conducted each year.

CHURCHGOING, NATIONWIDE: CANADA AND U.S.
(In selected years)

	Canada	U.S.
1981	37%	40%*
1980	35	40
1979	37	40
1978	35	41
1977	38	41
1970	44	42
1965	55	44

**Average to date.*

EMERGING TRENDS is published monthly except July and August by the PRINCETON RELIGION RESEARCH CENTER. The Center, founded in 1977, is an inter-faith non-denominational research organization with headquarters in Princeton, New Jersey. The PRRC specializes in creative, actionable research, utilizing the worldwide attitudinal and behavioral facilities of Gallup International. The purpose of the PRRC is to gain a better understanding of the nature and depth of religious commitment in the U.S. and abroad and to explore ways this information can enable religious leaders to promote spiritual growth. A one year subscription can be obtained for $20; inquire: **Publications Department, 53 Bank Street, Princeton, N.J. 08540 (Telephone: 609-924-2809). PLEASE NOTIFY US OF ADDRESS CHANGE.**

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RELIGIOUS BELIEFS 'VERY IMPORTANT' TO 6 IN EVERY 10 AMERICAN ADULTS

PRINCETON, N.J. – Six in 10 Americans (59%) say their religious beliefs are "very important" in their lives, while 27% say "fairly important," 9% "not too important" and 4% "not at all important."

A gradual uptrend in those saying "very important" is noted since 1974 when this measurement was started.

Here is the question:

"How important to you are your religious beliefs – very important, fairly important, not too important, or not at all important?"

Here is the trend, with the categories "not too" and "not at all" combined and the "no opinion" category excluded:

IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS IN LIVES

	Very	Fairly	Not too, Not at all
LATEST	59%	27%	13%
1979	59	28	12
1978*	57	28	14
1976	56	29	15
1974	56	30	13

*Average of three surveys

A far higher proportion of women (68%) than men (49%) say their religious beliefs are "very important" to themselves.

Protestants and Catholics give similar responses, as seen in the accompanying table.

The difference in the results by age groups is pronounced, with older persons (50 and older) most likely to say their religious beliefs are "very important" in their lives. As many as 7 in 10 (68%) do so.

A total of 61% of married persons compared to 46% among those who are single give this category of response. Of particular interest is the finding that as high a proportion as 74% of those who are widowed (or are widowers) say religion is "very important" in their lives.

The latest results are based on in-person interviews with 1,545 adults, 18 and over, conducted in more than 300 scientifically-selected locations across the nation during the period July 17-20.

For results based on a sample of this size, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects could be three percentage points in either direction.

43% of Teens Say 'Very Important'

The proportion of teens who say their religious beliefs are "very important" in their lives (43%) is considerably lower than the comparable percentage for adults (59%). At the same time, however, the figure is only slightly lower than the percentage recorded for young adults, 18 to 24-years-old (49%).

Although male teenagers are less likely than are their female counterparts to say "very important," the differences are not so great as in the case of adults.

Of particular interest is the finding that as many as one-fourth of teenagers who do not attend church regularly say their religious beliefs are "very important" in their lives.

The following table shows the proportion of key groups among teenagers who give the response "very important:"

TEENAGERS WHO SAY 'VERY IMPORTANT'

Total	43%
Boys	40
Girls	46
13-15 years old	44
16-18 years old	42
Protestants	47
Catholics	42
Academic standing –	
Above average	46
Average or below	39
Regular church attenders	56
Not regular	24

IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS IN LIVES

(By groups – adults)

	Very	Fairly	Not too	Not at all	No Opinion
NATIONWIDE	59%	27%	9%	4%	1%
Men	49	32	12	6	1
Women	68	22	6	3	1
Protestants	62	28	7	2	1
Catholics	64	28	5	2	1

Third Of Westerners 'Never' Attend Church

PRINCETON, N.J. – A special Gallup study of the frequency of churchgoing, conducted in July, shows that as many as one-third (32%) of adults living in the Western states *never* attend religious services, even on special holidays.

In contrast, only 13% of Southerners, 14% of persons living in the Midwest and 19% of Easterners give this response.

A slightly higher proportion of Protestants than Catholics attend religious services "more than once a week" (13% compared to 8%), yet Protestants attend less frequently than Catholics in terms of total times per month.

Following is the question:

"About how often, on the average, do you, yourself, attend religious services?"

The results by major regions of the nation and by Protestants and Catholics are seen in the accompanying tables.

Details of Survey

The latest results are based on in-person interviews with 1,545 adults, 18 and over, conducted in more than 300 scientifically-selected locations across the nation during the period July 17-20.

For results based on a sample of this size, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects could be three percentage points in either direction.

FREQUENCY OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE
(By Major Regions)

	East	Midwest	South	West
More than once a week	7%	11%	16%	8%
Once a week	21	29	26	19
2 or 3 times a month	12	12	13	5
Once a month or less	15	16	17	14
Just on special holidays	23	16	13	21
Not at all	19	14	13	32
Don't know/no answer	3	2	2	1
	100%	100%	100%	100%

FREQUENCY OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE
(Protestants and Catholics)

	Total	Protestants	Catholics
More than once a week	11%	13%	8%
Once a week	24	23	35
2 or 3 times a month	11	12	12
Once a month or less	16	17	14
Just on special holidays	18	17	19
Not at all	18	16	11
Don't know/no answer	2	2	1
	100%	100%	100%

RELIGION AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS: 1961 AND 1981

PRINCETON, N.J. – Although little change appears to have occurred in church membership and attendance among teenagers during the last few years, current survey findings represent a sharp change from those recorded 20 years ago, in 1961.

Whereas more than 8 in 10 teenagers belonged to a church in 1961, the current proportion is about 7 in 10.

Similarly, a downtrend is noted in churchgoing: in 1961, about 7 in 10 teens attended church in a typical week; the proportion today is 5 in 10.

Little change has come about in the proportion who say they believe in a God – 9 in 10 in each survey – but a larger proportion in 1961 (8 in 10) than today (7 in 10) say they believe in a *personal* God who observes people and is reachable through prayer.

The 1961 findings are from a Gallup survey of teenagers, conducted for *The Saturday Evening Post*. The latest figures are based on recent surveys conducted by the Gallup Youth Survey.

HOW TO REACH THE UNCHURCHED AMERICAN

Some 61 million American adults are not members of any church. Yet as many as half this number see a situation where they could become active members of a church today.

A nationwide study – the first to deal specifically with the values, interests, and backgrounds of the unchurched – points to concrete steps that can be taken to reach those who are churchless. This study was carried out by the Gallup Organization and the Princeton Religion Research Center for a coalition of 31 religious groups and denominations.

The report on this study has been reprinted due to popular demand. To order, send $15 to the Princeton Religion Research Center, Inc., P.O. Box 310, Princeton, N.J. 08540.

Clergy Rated Highest On 'Ethics'

PRINCETON, N.J. — Clergymen and pharmacists are rated highest by the public in terms of "honesty" and "ethical standards" among 24 professions and occupations tested.

These findings are based on the third Gallup study of public perceptions of the ethics of persons in a wide range of professions. This question has been asked in each survey:

"How would you rate the honesty and ethical standards of people in these different fields — very high, high, average, low or very low?"

While certain professions or occupations do not fare too well in these studies, it is important to bear in mind that these findings reflect public *perceptions* only and are not necessarily a true indication of the ethical standards of a particular group.

At the same time, however, the findings suggest the need for a strong public relations effort on the part of certain professions or occupations.

CLERGY AGAIN TOP LIST

Clergymen, as in the three earlier surveys, come out on top on this "ethics scale," with 63% of persons in the survey giving them either a very high or high rating.

Next are pharmacists or druggists, with a positive rating of 59%.

Following closely are dentists, medical doctors, engineers, college professors and policemen, with overall positive ratings ranging from 52 to 44%.

The next highest groups include bankers, TV reporters or commentators, newspaper reporters and funeral directors, with positive scores ranging from 39 to 30%.

In the middle range, with positive ratings from 25 to 19%, are lawyers, stockbrokers, U.S. Senators, business executives, and building contractors.

Next in terms of public perceptions, with positive ratings ranging from 15 to 9% are U.S. Congressmen, local political officeholders, realtors, labor union leaders, state political officeholders, insurance salesmen and advertising practitioners.

At the bottom are car salesmen, the unwitting butt of many jokes. They receive a positive rating of only 6%.

LOW IMAGE OF POLITICIANS

The current findings give further evidence of the poor public image of politicians in the United States. Although U.S. Senators fare relatively well on this ethics scale, state and local officeholders are among the lowest rated of the occupations tested.

Collectively, the professions and occupations that receive the lowest scores for honesty and ethics are those that involve selling.

Only about one person in ten rates the ethics of realtors, insurance salesmen and advertising practitioners in positive terms. In contrast, about three persons in ten rate each of these occupations as very low or low.

These findings suggest that occupations which depend heavily on personal salesmanship to promote their products and services, ironically, have done a poor job of selling themselves.

The accompanying table shows the national ratings in detail.

The current results show little change from those recorded in three previous surveys.

The results reported today are based on 1,564 personal interviews with adults, 18 and older, conducted in more than 300 scientifically-selected localities across the nation during the period July 24-27.

For results based on a sample of this size, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects could be three percentage points in either direction.

HONESTY AND ETHICAL STANDARDS
(24 Occupations/Professions Tested)

	Very high, high	Average	Low, very low	No opinion
Clergymen	63%	28%	6%	3%
Druggists, pharmacists	59	33	5	3
Dentists	52	38	7	3
Medical doctors	50	38	10	2
Engineers	48	35	5	12
College teachers	45	36	8	11
Policemen	44	41	13	2
Bankers	39	47	10	4
TV reporters, commentators	36	45	15	4
Newspaper reporters	30	49	16	5
Funeral directors	30	41	19	10
Lawyers	25	41	27	7
Stockbrokers	21	46	7	26
Senators	20	50	25	5
Business executives	19	53	19	9
Building contractors	19	48	27	6
Congressmen	15	47	32	6
Local political officeholders	14	51	30	5
Realtors	14	48	30	8
Labor union leaders	14	29	48	9
State political officeholders	12	50	30	8
Insurance salesmen	11	49	36	4
Advertising practitioners	9	41	38	12
Car salesmen	6	33	55	6

Churches Rate High On Urban Effort

PRINCETON, N.J. – Local service groups, the local Jaycees and local churches top a list of 24 organizations in terms of those that urban residents perceive to be "trying to improve city life."

In the latest survey, 47% of urban residents say local churches are attempting to upgrade the quality of urban life. Four years ago, the figure was statistically the same, 48%.

A total of 5% of city dwellers feel that the churches are not trying to improve city life, while as many as one half (48%) feel they are unable to give an opinion.

When the views of only those who responded to the question are considered (52% of the sample), 9 in 10 urban residents (90%) are found to believe local churches are trying to improve life in urban areas.

Local churches are one of the three organizations that lead the list of 24. The others are "local service clubs," with a comparable score of 92% and the local Jaycees with a figure of 91%, based on those who give responses.

Following is the full list, with percentages based on those who offered an opinion:

ORGANIZATIONS PERCEIVED TO BE TRYING TO IMPROVE CITY LIFE
(Percent of "informed" saying organization "is trying")

Local Service Clubs	92%
Local Jaycees	91
Local Churches	90
Neighborhood Groups	89
Women's Clubs	85
League of Women Voters	85
Local Newspapers	80
Local TV Stations	79
Chamber of Commerce	78
City Banks	77
Retailers	75
Small Companies	74
Local Radio Stations	72
Your Company	71
District Councilman	70
Mayor	65
City Council	62
City Insurance Agencies	56
Local Builders	54
Major Companies	53
Advertising Industry	44
Local Labor Unions	42
Local Real Estate People	42
Public Utilities	29

These results are part of a special Gallup study of residents of cities with populations of 50,000 or more, conducted for the *National League of Cities*. The study is based on 1,753 personal interviews with a nationally representative sample of urban residents, 18 and older, conducted in 1980.

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